

# OKLAHOMA BOMBING

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## Area buildings tighten security

By Paula Lavigne  
Senior Reporter

While rescuers searched for bodies at the federal office building in Oklahoma City on Wednesday, the mood at the Robert Denney Federal Building in Lincoln was quiet but tense.

No guards were visible in the lobby, and people were entering freely.

But the Edward Zorinsky federal office building in Omaha was evacuated about 1 p.m. after receiving a bomb threat, said Bond Faulwell, deputy regional administrator in Kansas City, Mo.

About 1,200 people were evacuated. A bomb unit with dogs searched the building and found a suspicious package, which was examined and found to contain paper towels.

The building was declared safe for re-entry about 3 p.m.

"There probably would not have been a bomb threat here if it hadn't been for the Oklahoma City incident," said Lt. Gary Becerra, head of the Omaha police bomb unit. "We probably would have swept the building and we probably would not have found that box."

Federal buildings in Boston, Oregon and Delaware also were evacuated after the explosion.

Sen. James Exon, D-Neb., who was in his Lincoln office on the second-floor of the federal building Wednesday afternoon, said security needed to be tightened there.

"I don't think we have any security measures here, even," Exon told the Daily Nebraskan.

Security measures for federal buildings across the United States should be closely studied to

avoid making any rash decisions, Exon said.

"When you get up in the morning and walk across the street, you're taking a risk," Exon said. "We just have to keep our heads screwed on."

Lincoln building administrators made sure the loading dock doors were locked to ward off a potential car bomber. The building's day care center also closed early, and day care administrators called parents to pick up their children.

A day care center also was located in the Oklahoma City building, where at least 12 children were killed.

The Lincoln building's first-floor day care center was dark Wednesday afternoon, and supervisors were screening people who entered.

Renee Gross, an employee at the federal building, picked up her infant son, Brett.

The bombing scared her, Gross said, and she was worried about friends who worked at the offices in Oklahoma City.

Gross said she was concerned about the potential of a bomb in Lincoln, but she said she still would use the building's day care because of the convenience.

No threats or violent incidents were reported at the federal offices in Lincoln. But some people who work in the building said a terrorist act easily could happen in Lincoln.

"It could happen here without a whole lot of trouble," said Pete Picard, who works in the department of transportation. "There's a good smoke alarm system here, but it doesn't find bombs very easily."

The fourth and fifth floors of the building, which house federal courtrooms, are secured by the U.S. Marshal's Office, said Ryan Thomp-

### Bomb threats

Telephone bomb threats led authorities to evacuate government buildings in several U.S. cities. A federal building in Boston and Boston City Hall were also evacuated.



AP

son, the supervising marshal deputy in Lincoln.

Thompson said he was advised by marshal's offices in Omaha and Washington to increase security. His staff, which normally uses metal detectors and x-ray scanners, was advised to be more alert, Thompson said.

Editor Jeff Zeleny and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

## Honor dead with justice

Sam Kepfield

OKLAHOMA CITY

This isn't supposed to happen in Oklahoma. Without warning, on Wednesday morning the northern half of the federal building in downtown Oklahoma City disappeared. It took a still-uncounted number of lives with it, most of them belonging to children.

My wife of eight months was almost one of the casualties. Mindy's office is — was — next door to the federal building. She managed to escape crumbling ceilings and walls with nothing more than a bruise and a few minor cuts. I thank God we will be able to celebrate our first anniversary this August.

The reality is still sinking in for both of us. After I personally viewed the scene in downtown Oklahoma City a few hours after the explosion, even 5 or 6 blocks away no window was left unshattered. Glass littered the sidewalks, National Guardsmen secured the downtown area and sheriff's patrol on horseback made their presence felt.

The difference between seeing this in person and seeing it on television cannot be described.

If one asks "Why Oklahoma City?" then you've already answered your own question. Here out on the Great Plains, or "fly-over country" to those on the coasts, we're presumably insulated from this sort of evil. But no more.

Make no mistake, this is evil, pure and simple. There is absolutely no way that a sane, rational person could justify the death of innocent bystanders, let alone children, in such an unprovoked attack. No war was declared; no warning given.

Theories abound as to who is behind this. Some point to Middle Eastern terrorists bent on waging war against a decadent western imperialism. Others point to the Branch Davidians, noting that it was two years ago to the day that the Waco compound went up in flames.

Whatever the cause, whoever the perpetrators, the outcome cannot be in doubt. Those responsible must be arrested and tried. If convicted, they must be executed, though even that would be better than they deserve for committing such an atrocity.

Individuals who can, without remorse, commit such an act have placed themselves outside of the boundaries of civilized society and have thereby forfeited any right to the protections it offers. To have them piously and righteously stand in the witness box and proclaim their mad theories of a holy war is an affront to any notion we may have of justice.

A truly appropriate solution would be a bullet in the back of the head and their bodies hung on meathooks from the nearest streetlamp for all to see. If this attack was state-sponsored, the nation behind this should be turned into a smoking, glowing expanse of molten glass.

Does this sound harsh, insensitive? Well, of course it is.

But in ages past, wars were started over far less. Acts such as this must be met with swift, sure and severe retribution. Yet such extreme action is unlikely in an age where one can find plenty of apologists for any sort of unprovoked violence like this.

That there can be any debate on this sort of thing speaks volumes on the state of our society.

Let others with more information and more expertise pontificate upon the geo-political and national-security ramifications of this incident. Let decision-makers take the appropriate measures in response.

The immediate reaction from here, however, is that this bombing has hit too damn close to home. And I just thank God it didn't hit closer.

Let us pray for the souls of those who died and let us also pray that justice be done.

Editor's note: Sam Kepfield, a longtime Daily Nebraskan columnist, was asked to provide his perspective on this tragic event. He is a doctoral candidate in history at the University of Oklahoma.

## At least 12 children among victims

By Julia Prodis  
The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — Wednesday's blast occurred at the start of the work day, as parents were dropping off their youngsters at the day care center in the federal building.

Before the smoke had cleared, Paramedic Heather Taylor had tagged the feet of at least a dozen children at the morgue.

Two were burned beyond recognition. The bodies of the rest, up to 7 years old, were mangled.

Ten to 20 other children were unaccounted for late in the day. Taylor knew of only two who had survived. One was in surgery, the other in intensive care.

"The day-care center is totally gone," said Dr. Carl Spengler, who helped Taylor with the

victims.

The center was on the second floor of the nine-story Albert Murrah Federal Building, just above the spot where the car bomb exploded. Toys and games were scattered amid broken glass and other debris on the street.

Parents waited.

Grandparents wondered.

Rescuers worked.

One woman who survived the blast stood outside the building, screaming for her child. Rescuers ushered her away just before they brought out a victim they believed to be her dead son.

Wanda McNeely searched frantically for her 6-month-old grandson's name on the list of the injured at Children's Hospital. After checking with three hospitals, McNeely decided to go to the morgue at St. Anthony Hospital.

### Witness

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served were cuts to a few people's heads.

"Most people were fine, but I could tell they were extremely shook up," Kepfield said.

Firefighters used ladders to retrieve people stranded on the second floor of The Journal Record because the stairwell had collapsed.

Outside the building, people were in chaos. "There was no way to find out anything," she said.

Kepfield said she did not realize the explosion came from the federal building until she and a co-worker went to a nearby law firm to wash her wounds and call her husband, Sam Kepfield. He also is a former NU student and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

When they left, a man approached them on the street and told them the news.

"He told us, 'The federal building is no more. It's leveled,'" she said.

Kepfield gave her account of the incident on Oklahoma City's CBS affiliate KWTU, which CNN also broadcast nationwide.

That was when her father, watching television from the federal building in Lincoln, knew she was OK.

Robert Leiter got a call at 10:30 a.m. from his wife, Theresa, saying that their daughter was alive. But he said he was unsure of her condition until he saw her on television in the employee lounge.

"I found myself pacing a lot at the office," he said.

Leiter said a co-worker told him about the explosion earlier that morning, and he became concerned when he remembered his daughter



Travis Heying/DN

Robert and Theresa Leiter stayed tuned to coverage of the bombing Wednesday. Their daughter, Mindy Kepfield, was in the area at the time of the explosion.

worked in the area.

"You pray for the phone call and sit and worry," he said.

Robert Leiter said he felt relieved when he heard the news his daughter was safe.

Mindy Kepfield said she was dismayed so

many people were hurt in the blast and afraid for the people trapped inside. The worst tragedy was the 17 children killed in the building's second-floor day care center, she said.

"I don't see how anyone in that section of the federal building could have survived."